

Forest Stewardship: Helping Landowners Achieve Multiple Objectives

There are about 51,000 forested acres in the Rural Forest Focus areas of King County. These areas, which form a buffer between the suburbs and rural cities of the county and the working and protected forests of the Cascade foothills, are owned predominately by private landowners with lots between 5 and 20 acres in size. Though privately owned, these forested lands provide multiple public benefits to the region, including flood control, habitat for fish and wildlife, including the federally listed Chinook salmon, a local source of timber and non-timber forest products, and amenity values.

Every private forest owner's set of property goals is unique, and may include wildlife habitat enhancement, income generation from timber production, recreational uses, a place of refuge and solitude, or simply the maintenance of a healthy forest.

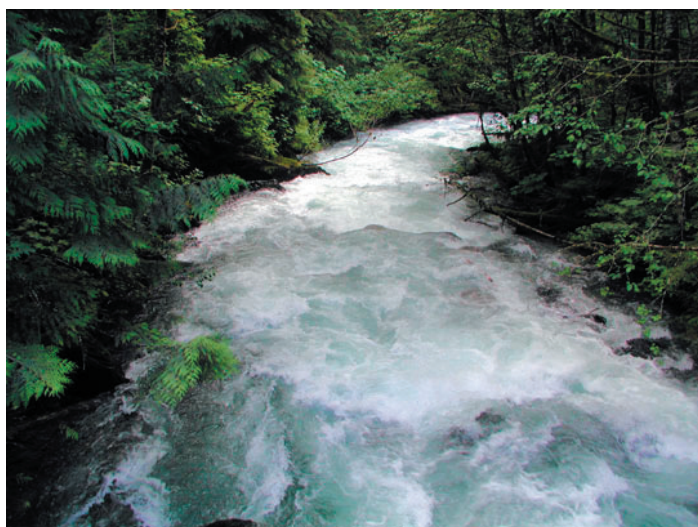


King County Forester Bill Loeber explains forest inventory methods to Forest Stewardship Class participants.

Photo A. Grotta

"I took this class to gain familiarity with our family property so that I could participate in conversations about it in an educated way."

King County has partnered with Washington State University (WSU) Extension and the Washington Department of Natural Resources to conduct **Forest Stewardship Coached Planning** courses to help family forest owners achieve their ownership goals and objectives through up-to-date information and hands-on instruction about forest health and function. In King County, the classes are tailored specifically to the issues facing owners at the rural/urban interface. The eight-week courses are held three times a year at different locations around the county.



Forest stewardship classes encourage protection of stream health and function, which ultimately benefits all of King County's residents.

Photo S. Sax

"This class took away some of the trepidation I had about somehow making a big mistake."

FOREST STEWARDSHIP CLASS TOPICS:

Forest Ecology	Silviculture
Forest Inventory	Site Mapping
Fire Management	Soils
Hydrology	Special Forest Products
Insects and Diseases	Stewardship Planning
Management Timelines	Tax Incentive Programs
Noxious Weeds	Tree Identification
Regulatory Issues	Wildlife
Riparian Areas	Wetlands

Healthy, Productive Forests -- One Acre at a Time



Washington Department of Natural Resources Forest Pathologist Melanie Kallas shows Forest Stewardship Class participants how to detect evidence of root rot disease.

Photo A. Grotta



Students examine a core taken from a tree to assess the forest's age and growth history.

Photo A. Grotta

Since 1999, **over 400 individuals representing over 300 households and more than 5,000 acres** have taken part in Forest Stewardship Coached Planning courses. Many have submitted Forest Stewardship Plans to become eligible for Forestlands, Timberlands, or Public Benefit Rating System tax incentive programs. Others have completed stewardship plans to benefit from having written documentation of their goals, objectives, resources, and implementation strategies. Still others take the classes simply to learn more about their property.

During the first half of 2005, Forest Stewardship classes were conducted in Bellevue and Vashon; a third class will be held in Maple Valley beginning in September. **Thirty individuals owning over 470 acres** participated in the Bellevue class; to date, **six new Forest Stewardship Plans encompassing nearly 80 forested acres in rural King County** have been completed by this year's class participants, with four additional plans in progress.

In addition, WSU Extension conducts several one-day workshops each year intended to provide landowners with practical tools and knowledge to become better land stewards. Recent well-received workshop topics have included Tree Planting 101 and Chainsaw Safety and Maintenance. Programs planned for the latter half of 2005 include Thinning for Forest Health and Estate Planning (in conjunction with WSU/Snohomish County Extension).

"We liked the enthusiasm of the instructors, and their lack of political agendas."

"It was valuable to meet other property owners with similar interests."

"I realized that I could materially enhance the diversity of both plants and wildlife on my property. I thought initially that I would have to leave everything alone."

For more information on the Forest Stewardship Program visit our webpage at www.metrokc.gov/ws-u-ce/forestry or call 206-205-3132

Amy Grotta
Extension Educator
(206) 205-3132
amy.grotta@metrokc.gov

WSU King County Extension
919 SW Grady Way, Suite 120
Renton, WA 98055-2980
<http://www.metrokc.gov/ws-u-ce>

